GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4696
ANSWERED ON:09.05.2007
INDO- IRAN GAS PIPELINE PROJECT
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Power Secretary of USA visited India recently;

(b) if so, whether he advised India to backout from the Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the present status of the Indo-Iran Gas Pipeline Project; and

(e) the time by which the agreement is likely to be signed in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) U.S. Secretary of Energy, Mr. Samuel W. Bodman visited India on March 20-22, 2007.

(b)-(c) During the recent meeting of Secretary Samuel Bodman with Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas on 20th March 2007, when the issue of Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project came up for discussion, he was informed that India was free to pursue its energy option with any country and would act independently to pursue its interest.

(d)-(e) In January 2005, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was authorised to conduct negotiations for an overland pipeline from Iran through Pakistan taking into account cost effectiveness, security concerns and assured supplies. So far, three Special Joint Working Group meetings between India and Iran, and four JWG meetings between India and Pakistan have been held. Secretary-level tripartite talks were held in Tehran on March 14-15, 2006, in Islamabad on May 22-24, 2006, in Delhi on August 3-4, 2006, and in Tehran on January 24-25, 2007. Various issues are under discussion amongst the participating countries. The signing of the agreement can take place after the issues under discussion are resolved.